

## A Time of Trouble

August 2012

Dear Brethren:

Warmest greetings from the Texas brethren to all of you whom God has called and given of His Holy Spirit, making us the firstfruits of His harvest. This first harvest will begin with the return of Jesus Christ—taking His rightful place as King of Kings and Lord of Lords at the sound of the seventh trumpet blast from heaven—to gather His bride to Him, those who have endured the chastening of the Lord. They passed the test of endurance. God's people are constantly meeting trials and tests of every sort, being continually forced to cry out to Him for deliverance.

Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the Lord delivers him out of them all [if we hold steadfast to our calling] (Psalm 34:19, *New King James Version* throughout).

But he who endures to the end shall be saved [from eternal death] (Matthew 24:13).

Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God [some will depart, and others will be tempted to depart as the pressure from persecution is turned up]; but exhort one another daily, while it is called "*Today*," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end (Hebrews 3:12–14).

As it has been said before, it will not always be smooth sailing for true Christians. God allows His children to suffer, to fall into troubles, and to face difficulties for the purpose of strengthening our faith and teaching us patience. At times the trial is so severe that we tend to forget or to lose faith.

No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16).

It is not just a matter of how we conduct our lives, but whether our righteous conduct will remain all the way to the end.

These are troubling times for "Christianity" in America, and the world is coming ever closer to the time called Jacob's trouble (Jeremiah 37). Christianity is already in decline, and atheism is on the rise. The highest court in the land rules that it is unconstitutional to display the Ten Commandments or other religious symbols in the public square. The courts argue to remove the phrase "under God" or "in God we trust" from our children's textbooks. Trusting in God is what our nation was founded upon. Our founding fathers believed a nation under God would bring peace, prosperity and power. They knew that God has a hand in the affairs of men. George Washington, first President of the United States, recommended to all the people to observe Thursday, February 19, as a day of public thanksgiving and prayer. Abraham Lincoln was another who manifested in his public speaking and writings his strong belief in the hand of God ruling in the lives of men and nations. They also believed God would remove the hedge of protection from any nation that turned from observing God's laws and started doing their own thing. Even though they never understood the truth or worshipped God correctly, they at least respected the Bible and its moral principles.

But those sacred things of God have been replaced by all of the idols and wickedness of man. Our once beloved nation and God-fearing people have turned to worshiping idols—idols of greed, materialism, money, sexual immorality, TV, pornography, self-worship, and on it goes. "For their feet run to evil, And they make haste to shed blood" (Proverbs 1:16).

### **Interesting Prayer By Minister Joe Wright**

This prayer is a good reminder of the reason our nation is in big trouble:

Heavenly Father, we come before you today to ask your forgiveness and seek your direction and guidance. Lord, we know your word says, "Woe to those who call evil good," but that's exactly what we've done. We have lost our spiritual equilibrium and inverted our values. We confess that we have ridiculed the absolute truth of your word and called it moral pluralism. We have worshipped other gods and called it multi-culturalism. We have endorsed perversion and called it an alternative lifestyle. We have exploited the poor and called it the lottery. We have neglected the needy and called it self-preservation. We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare. We have killed our unborn and called it choice. We have shot abortionists and called it justifiable. We have neglected to discipline our children and called it building esteem. We have abused power and called it political savvy. We have coveted our neighbor's possessions and called it ambition. We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it freedom of expression. We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our fore-fathers and called it enlightenment. Search us oh, God and know our hearts today; cleanse us from every sin and set us free. . . .

This prayer is even more appropriate now than when it was first given in 2002 when minister Joe Wright was asked to open the new session of the Kansas House of Representatives. Some got up and walked out in protest. Our nation has not turned from its strange gods and idol worship, but instead has "walked out" and gone further and further from the laws God once gave to humanity. Those laws, if diligently observed, would have produced a vibrant economy, but instead, the pride of our power has been broken (Leviticus 26:19). We are so deep in debt to other nations that the U.S. dollar is losing its power. Our banks are being downgraded. The dollar will soon no longer be the world currency it has been for many years. We will be the tail, and others stronger than we will be the head (Deuteronomy 28:44). Our nation could yet be respected if we would repent of our evil ways and walk in His ways.

The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways. Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they shall be afraid of you (Deuteronomy 28:9–10).

But "all we like sheep have gone astray" (Isaiah 53:6), and the world will not turn to Him willingly, but only after great distress and anguish.

When your terror comes like a storm, And your destruction comes like a whirlwind, When distress and anguish come upon you (Proverbs 1:27).

We are entering the time when man is trying desperately to create a one-world government inspired by Satan the devil. This will be man's last attempt to rule the world, and it will end with the great slaughter described in Revelation 16:14–17:

For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, which go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame. And they gathered them together to the place called in Hebrew, Armageddon. Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done!"

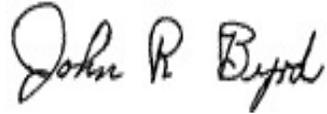
Jesus Christ, the conquering King, will then bring the time of Jacob's trouble to its end, ushering in the World Tomorrow with great peace and joy. The world will come to know Him, from the smallest to the greatest.

He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my

fortress; My God, in Him I will trust. Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler And from the perilous pestilence (Psalm 91:1-3).

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thessalonians 1:2).

Your servant in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John R. Byrd". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and 'B'.

John R. Byrd